REGISTER OF CLASSIFICATION DECISIONS

Date of entry in Register:	16 April 2002
Name of applicant/court:	Secretary for Internal Affairs
Applicant to the Labelling Body:	Not Applicable
Title of Publication:	Da Gospel According To Ali G
Other Known Titles:	The Gospel According To Ali G
Director:	Not Applicable
Producer:	Not Applicable
Publisher:	Fourth Estate
Authors:	Sacha Baron-Cohen, Dan Mazer, Ant Hines
Format:	Book
Country of Origin:	UK
Language:	English

Components of film originally examined: Not Applicable.

Feature: Running time:

Trailers: Running time:

Total Running time:

Excision/Alteration: Not Applicable.

Reason(s) for Excision:

Not Applicable.

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Classification Decision:

Objectionable except if the availability of the publication is restricted to persons who have attained the age of 18 years.

Display Conditions:

That when the publication is on public display, the classification given to the publication must be shown on the publication;

and

That the publication must be publicly displayed only in a sealed package.

Descriptive Note:

Not Applicable.

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Direction to issue a label has been given on: Not Applicable.

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SUMMARY OF THE REASONS FOR DECISION:

The book *Da Gospel According To Ali G* is classified as:
Objectionable except if the availability of the publication is restricted to persons who have attained the age of 18 years.

The book *Da Gospel According To Ali G* is a "spin-off" from a popular television series, featuring a character that is a spoof of a young suburban "hip hopper" with "gangsta" aspirations. The material is a complex parody that satirises politically correct attitudes. A misogynistic, occasionally dehumanising treatment of women, and a portrayal of petty crime, including drug use, as an acceptable part of the hip hop lifestyle, are elements of the parody. A great deal of the material is presented as schoolboy humour, appropriate to the naïve and uneducated character and with undoubted appeal to the teenagers among the television show's audience. However, the prevailing manner of sexual depictions is a parody of a rather more salacious pornographic style that includes sexually explicit images, and is intended for adult readers. Futhermore, the dehumanising treatment of women and the portrayal of petty crime and drug use tend to trivialise and normalise these matters in the hands of young, perhaps less "savvy" readers.

The likelihood of injury to the public good arising from the availability of the publication has been weighed against the right to freedom of expression set out in s14 of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990. A classification restricting the availability of the publication to adults represents the minimum interference with the freedom of expression consistent with preventing injury to the public good. The Classification Office is therefore of the view that a restricted classification is both reasonable and demonstrably justified.

OFLC Ref: 200042